

OGDEN, UTAH, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1915.

CONGRESS IS ASKED TO PRESERVE PRE-HISTORIC MOUNDS

Monks Of Cahokia Observe Strange Ritual In Honor Of a By-gone Race—Dress and Ceremonies Resemble That Of the Ku Klux—The Members Of This Secret Organization In Illinois Are Now Engaged In a Weird Task

About an ancient mound, where many centuries ago a now forgotten race worshipped, at the present day there appears mystic figures wearing cowls and masks and singing strange incantations that in their weirdness seem to be revivals of the chants of the original dwellers of the land.

These men or the Monks of Cahokia, come at night to honor the memory of that forgotten race of centuries ago. Not one is known to the other, not a word is spoken except the strange incantation and no eyes save those of the monks are allowed to gaze on the mystic rites for the dead buried beneath that mound.

The Mound of Cahokia is near East St. Louis. It is the work of the mound builders and its history is lost in the oblivion of the past.

The Monks of Cahokia are business men of Illinois. They now number more than 500, yet as was said before, during the entire ceremony at the mound the identity of each monk is concealed from that of the other and no word is interchanged between them.

There, before that mystic pile that contains beneath it the bones of perhaps the oldest inhabitants of this continent, with the moon as the only light for ceremony, the Monks of Cahokia chant their sad song to the memory of a forgotten race.

The chant of the new in the honor of the old is the only link that binds a forgotten race of mound builders to the present generation of Monks.

DRESS LIKE KU KLUX.

The organization of the Monks of Cahokia was formed many years ago and not until recently were the names of any of its members known. As mysterious as the Ku Klux or the night riders of Kentucky, these men in their cowls and wearing masks gathered at periods to engage in their mystic work. Glimmering lights appearing as will-o'-the-wisps occasionally gave to passersby a glimpse of this secret organization at its ritualistic work, but the full account of what occurs about the mound when the monks are at their prayers or rather incantations never has been fully known.

There are weird sounds, strange noises and strange words as the songs are sung for the dead of Cahokia Mound. The fleeting figures in their queer garb, the almost uncanny sounds of the incantations and the very mystery of the action of the monks, might lead to the belief that the dead mound builders were reincarnated and were singing their laments.

Until recently the names of the leaders of the Monks were shrouded in mystery. Some of the forms were recognized, but the Monks never revealed any of their secrets or admitted even their membership.

However, they finally decided that this gigantic mound should be perpetuated, and decided to call on congress to purchase the land on which it is located. Congress, however, failed to act favorably and now the

matter is before the Illinois legislature.

The publicity necessary for such a project revealed the names of the leaders of the movement. George E. Little of Edwardsville is Lord High Chancellor and J. H. Dierker of Edwardsville is amauensis. Among the recently admitted members are Congressman William E. Dudenberg, Judge W. E. Hadley of Edwardsville and Dr. Henry H. Whelpley, an archaeologist of St. Louis, who has explored the ancient mound and has taken from it many valuable relics.

MIXING IN THE MODERN.

The membership of the order now equals 500, more than 150 new ones being initiated at a recent meeting at the Elks' club. This was one of the few initiations not held at the mound itself, and antiquity was mixed with the modern by a cabaret following the initiation.

Before the service the Monks in their strange garb paraded the streets of East St. Louis, headed by a brass band. They were so disguised by their masks and with the hood of their cowls drawn over their heads that it was impossible for the crowd that viewed the parade to recognize any individual.

The Mound of Cahokia is in St. Clair county, Illinois. It is surrounded by a chain of smaller mounds. In all there are 26 mounds in an area of 250 acres and it is this land that the Monks have asked the state of Illinois to purchase as a park.

The history of the ancient race that constructed these mounds is buried in the deepest antiquity. Archaeologists are certain that they even ante-dated the Indians who were supposed to be the first inhabitants of this continent.

Geologists, too, give to the mound builders a very early period in the history of the world. It is certain from observations of both classes of scientists that at some period estimated as far back as 10,000 to 20,000 years ago by the geologists and 2,000 to 5,000 by archaeologists and historians, there lived in America an ancient race that in many ways excelled in accomplishments the Indians who succeeded them.

What the exact period of their existence was never will be learned, unless at some future date the exploration of some of the mounds reveals tablets that will give the world the history of this most ancient race.

HISTORY IN DOUBT.

Whether they flourished before the glacial period has not been established. The high-class of their work indicates that perhaps it was after the glacial period. Drawing

on the rocks on the bluffs along the Mississippi river may have been by the mound dwellers or the Indians who succeeded them. These drawings in a mixture of red fire clay and some peculiarly lasting oil, represented strange birds and animals, now long extinct. One prominent one drawn on the limestone of the bluffs is of the Plasa bird, a bird of mythology that may have had something to do with the religious worship of this ancient race.

The exploration of many of the mounds found throughout the United States brought forth indications that the mound builders were of the same high order of civilization as the Egyptians, if not of a contemporaneous period.

Their pottery work far excelled that of the Indians who inhabit the United States. They had pots and vases with handles, showing the higher accomplishment in the production of clay utensils.

They had spears with iron heads and bodies of bamboo, crudely fashioned knives of iron blades and wooden handles.

They had mills for grinding meal, the latter showing that in civilization they surpassed the Indian, although they ante-dated them.

The mound builders evidently were a peaceful nation. They hunted game as the relics of animals found in the mounds indicate. They apparently cultivated grain. They had a high degree of civilization. They were home loving. Nothing has

been discovered to indicate that they ever warred. Little there is to indicate that there were heroes among them or that any were called on to defend their homes.

What became of this ancient race? Certainly they were not wiped out by the Indians as there is nothing in the history of the latter race to indicate this.

WHAT WAS THEIR FATE?

It almost is certain that the ravages of disease could not have wiped out a nation that apparently was spread not only over North America, but evidence of which also is found in South America. Further proof that they lived before the great glacial period is found in the fact that in the ruins are found the bones of prehistoric animals—animals that were so gigantic that nothing but nature itself could have rendered them extinct.

There are many positive proofs that through a depression in yearly temperature a glacial period invaded Europe, Northern Asia and North America, burying wide expanses of territory under an ice-sheet of whose character and extent northern Greenland with its surface capped by ice can afford an idea.

The immediate result of this sudden climatic change was an essential alteration in the fauna. Animal forms

that were unequal to the impaired climate, that could neither resist it or adapt themselves to it, were at first driven back and then annihilated.

Were, then, the ancient builders of mounds of Cahokia and of other such mounds throughout the United States among those to be caught in the glacial period—that ancient time that ante-dates history itself and is known only from the unmistakable marks of its existence that archaeologists and geologists have found?

The glacial or drift period drove many animals from the western hemisphere to the eastern across what is now Behring sea.

Thus it is apparent that the last vestige of human life disappeared after the great ice does came down

from the north. When after thousands of years this ice melted there came to North America the Indians. They found the land uninhabited. But did they find the same mounds that are now seen through the country?

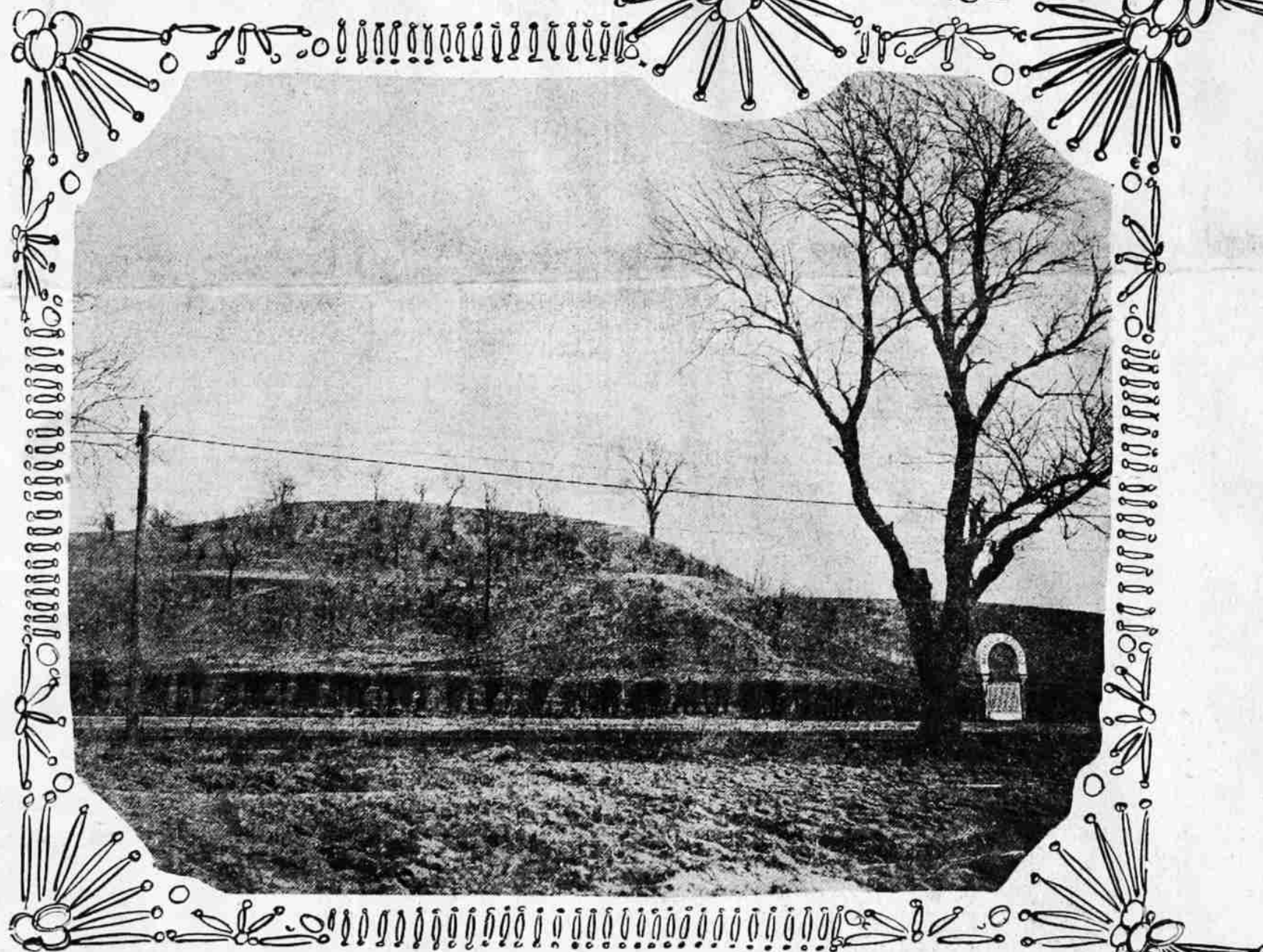
Whether or not the mound builders pre-dated them perhaps never will be learned.

It is this very mystery that the Monks of Cahokia today worship. There is something strange about those mounds as one views them. They cannot but recall vivid mental representations of an era long gone when a strange race trod there.

It is this veneration for antiquity that created the Monks of Cahokia, the most unique organization of its kind in the United States.



MONKS OF CAHOKIA A OPT THE
KU KLUX DRESS



"MONKS' MOUND"—NEAR EAST ST. LOUIS, ILL.

